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# THE OSS REVOLT THAT FAILED

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Deep behind German lines, a betrayed band of Yanks fled to glory despite the worst single defeat suffered by U.S. spies in World War II. Here's the whole story

□ It was time to run again. And the Americans ran—as they had been running for nearly a month. They ran from known danger into an unseen one while a monstrous November blizzard congealed their spirit as well as their exhausted bodies. The cutting edge of the north wind slashed at them as they gasped for breath in the icy, thin air of the White Carpathian Mountains bordering the Czechoslovakian provinces of Slovakia and Moravia. Wet snow hardened into ice on dirt-encrusted eyebrows and lice-ridden beards.

This was November, 1944. Allied armies had breached Hitler's Fortress Europe and even then were breaking down his 1000-year Third Reich. But in Central Europe, this encircled handful of Americans was still on the defensive, fleeing for dear life.

Their desperate flight ended in disaster. One moment there was silence broken only by the sounds of the storm; then there was the rattle of machine guns and the flat crack of rifles as the Germans ambushed them. Men toppled to the ground, dead or wounded, their arms loaded with rations instead of weapons.

Thus ended the ill-fated Dawes Mission, a World War II Office of Strategic Services operation in Czechoslovakia. It was the greatest loss suffered by the OSS in World War II. The names of the men who died as a result of it are still a secret, but the story came to light last September when four Americans in their early 40s returned to the scene of the operation to accept personally from President Novotny of Czechoslovakia a citation and medal commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Slovak uprising of 1944. These Americans had played a small but intriguing role in that uprising; they were four of the five survivors of the Dawes Mission.

If the uprising had been successful, it would have materially shortened the war, probably changed the character of postwar Eastern Europe, and certainly would have been headlined throughout the world by Associated Press war correspondent Joseph Morton, who accompanied the OSS agents behind enemy lines. Joe Morton wrote his story but it never got to press; he was captured and later executed at the Nazi concentration camp of Mauthausen. This then is the story of the OSS Revolt That Failed—how it failed and why.

By the summer of 1944, after U.S. and British armies had broken out of Normandy, the first rumblings of revolt were heard in the Carpathians. Allied strategists decided it was time to disrupt the Germans by fomenting insurrections behind the lines wherever possible. British agents parachuted into Central Europe and the United States asked Russia, who even then considered all Central Europe to be in her own sphere of influence, for permission to send American agents into Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and Rumania. Finally, the Russians reluctantly agreed to permit an American "military mission" to fly into Czechoslovakia to evacuate